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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000755

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KIRF](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 702

[B](#). BRATISLAVA 749

[C](#). BRATISLAVA 642

Classified By: DCM Lawrence R. Silverman for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

PARLIAMENT CRISIS OVER, PM GETS READY TO DEBATE FICO

[1](#)1. (C) PM Dzurinda's ruling coalition managed to get the support of 77 MPs (one more than needed) to reopen the parliamentary session on September 21, following a stalemate brought about by opposition parties and independents who had pushed for early elections (ref B). Following the opening, Dzurinda advisor Milan Jezovica (protect) contended to us that early elections are now "off the agenda," and the press reports that the coalition plans to table any discussion of the topic. Some pundits, however, still consider early elections a distinct possibility, but not before June (just three months ahead of schedule).

[1](#)2. (C) Meanwhile, Tatiana Rosova (also protect), another member of Dzurinda's inner circle, told us that the PM will follow through on the initiative he took to arrange a live television debate with opposition leader Robert Fico on September 25. Rosova is afraid that the debate will degenerate into pure political mudslinging, but told us that Dzurinda is holding a preparatory session on September 22 during which she will urge him to emphasize that the government is trying to take specific steps to improve the average Slovak's life, while the opposition tries to hamstring parliament solely for political gain. Rosova also said that Dzurinda's office has conducted focus groups with Fico supporters, and that the results have showed that support for Smer is not as "deep" as some believe.

PRESIDENT OPENS HOLOCAUST EXHIBIT

[1](#)3. (SBU) On September 8, President Gasparovic attended the opening of "The Fate of Slovak Jews," a permanent exhibit at the refurbished Nitra Synagogue, which now serves as a national museum. The powerful exhibit features memorabilia from Slovak work and concentration camps, as well as artifacts from Slovak Jewish communities and individuals decimated by the holocaust (including the tattooed skin from the arm of a recently deceased concentration camp survivor).

[1](#)4. (SBU) Gasparovic's remarks focused on the importance of remembering the past and accepting its as a dark period in Slovakia's history. Many of the other speakers echoed this theme, with one pointing out that "the holocaust had many victims; not only Jews, but Roma, Ruthenians, and homosexuals as well." Another speaker cited the exhibit as an important reminder that hate groups like Slovenska Pospolitost (ref C) are still active, and must be countered with tolerance. The opening -- which was well attended by the diplomatic corps, members of parliament, and even a group of tourists from Israel -- also featured performances musical, dramatic, and political (Gasparovic gave a very campaign trail-esque two handed "victory" salute as he departed the opening).

DRAXLER APPOINTED TRAFFICKING COORDINATOR

[1](#)5. (C) Though not yet public information, we have heard from sources at the MOI that Pavol Draxler (ref C), previously the coordinator for anti-extremism in Slovakia, has been appointed Slovakia's first national coordinator for anti-trafficking efforts. Draxler, who is already a trusted advisor to Minister of the Interior Vladimir Palko, told us that he is excited to be undertaking this new challenge.

SLOVAK VICTIMS' ASSISTANCE NGO TO GET EU FUNDS

[1](#)6. (C) Marian Kolencik, Director of DAFNE (an NGO working with trafficking victims) told poloffs September 19 that the group was recently awarded EUR 3 million through a new EU EQUAL Project. The partners include the Zilina Regional Government, some district work offices, and several international organizations from Sweden and France. The

project will support police training, work in schools, and other awareness activities such as a number of public plays about trafficking to be staged in 2007. Like many other small organizations, DAFNE is experiencing problems with the administrative burden of using EU funds, since most expenses will be reimbursed. They hope the project will commence in 2006.

17. (C) The DAFNE director also mentioned that the organization will not pursue more grants to start a new shelter for trafficking victims. In addition to security

concerns, DAFNE believes the initial investment and yearly operating costs are not as effective as working through the already existing network of social shelters. Kolencik stated that the trafficking awareness of the shelter staffs is increasing in this area, but low salaries result in high turnover rates.

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